My five greatest Irish films

THE growth of Irish cinema has blossomed like the shamrock it begs Hollywood to grasp.

Although many fine Irish actors such Peter O'Toole, Richard Harris and Cyril Cusack have graced the silver screen with effervescence and charisma, it could be argued that the best of Irish interest films have been made since the 1980s.

Talented Irish directors, such as Jim Sheridan and Neil Jordan, have made the medium of cinema the modern form of Irish storytelling, subverting Irish tradition and adopting European cinematic stylings.

And, following the colossally successful *The Commitments* (1991), the world seemed ready for further offerings from the Emerald Isle. Here are five that demand your attention...

MY LEFT FOOT (1989): A wonderful testament to the human spirit in which Daniel Day Lewis (right) stars as Christy Brown – a man who, despite being bereft of all physical control barring his left foot, defies all expectations. Day-Lewis' sensitive portrayal of Christy the painter, author, poet and socialite bestows dignity on his subject, whilst Brenda Fricker as Christy's devoted mother also puts in a memorable performance. The academy awards that both actors received were justly deserved. *My Left Foot* is a charming film and deserving of praise for the respect it shows its subject. Watch out for a youthful Fiona Shaw in one of her earliest film roles.

OSCAR WINNER: Daniel Day Lewis

THE SNAPPER (1993): Although never gaining the plaudits of *The Commitments, The Snapper* had just as much charm, but with an underlying Joycean pathos. An Irish tale of pre-marital pregnancy, Colm Meaney stars as father of the Curley household. Encompassing the best of Roddy Doyle's prose, *The Snapper* gave Stephen Frears the opportunity to perfect the character drama style he employed so successfully in the later *High Fidelity* and *Philomena.* And that *Lick The Tins* cover is worth the admission price alone.

ADAM AND PAUL (2004): If you thought *Withnail and I* hit a little close to the bone, you ain't seen nothing yet! The tale of two drug addicts, Lenny Abrahamson's debut is a marvellously morose characterisation. Written by Mark O'Halloran (who plays Adam, the more verbose of the pair), the script ventures into places even *Trainspotting* didn't dare to enter, and its ending is perhaps the most tragic of any comedy of the last 25 years. O'Halloran won the Evening Standard British Award for Best Screenplay – further proof, if needed, of the universality of this modern day parable.

SNAPPY PROSE: Roddy Doyle

HUNGER (2008): Although employing some artistic license with its historical sources, *Hunger* retains an indelible authority that is sorely lacking in Neil Jordan's better known *Michael Collins* (1996). Arguably Steve McQueen's strongest film (in a body of work that includes Oscar winner *12 Years A Slave*), *Hunger* brims with dirt, hurt, and pain – each scene more harrowing than the previous. The film's centrepiece – an incredible interplay between lead actors Michael Fassbender and Liam Cunningham – is handled in one marvellous, haunting segment that presents both sides of The Troubles in a staggeringly potent manner.

CALVARY (2014): "I think there's too much talk about sins and not enough about virtues," says Father James Lavelle (Brendan Gleeson) to his only child. Brendan Gleeson brings grace, humanity, humility and power to what is surely the performance of his life. Director John Michael McDonagh may not have the same penchant for writing that his brother Martin has, but his cinematic flair more than makes up for that. The blossoming hills of Sligo are prettier than any travel brochure can paint them and bring an extra dimension to this modern-day Western.

Honourable mentions: *The Field* (1990). *Into The West* (1992). *The Crying Game* (1992). *In The Name of The Father* (1993). *The General* (1998). *Veronica Guerin* (2003). *Inside I'm Dancing* (2004). *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* (2005). *The Guard* (2011). *What Richard Did* (2012). *Sing Street* (2016). *The Young Offenders* (2016).

By Eoghan Lyng

Do you have your own alternative list of the five greatest Irish films? If so, we want to hear about it. Send your suggestions with a brief description of why they are on your list to: news@irishpost.co.uk with 'My five greatest Irish films' as the subject

WINNING COMBINATION: Michael Fassbender with *Hunger* director Steve McQueen

SUDOKU

No.598

	5		4	2				
			5			2		8
3		4		8		7		
4		2					1	
7								5
	9					3		2
		8		4		5		6
6		7			8			
				3	1		2	

Sudoku requires no calculation or arithmetic skills. It is a game of placing numbers in squares using very simple rules of logic and deduction. It can be played by children and adults. Simply fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. However each number can appear only once on each row, column and 3x3 box. Answer next week.

Last week's solution:

4	5	9	2	7	6	1	8	3
8	7	2	1	3	5	4	9	6
1	3	6	9	8	4	7	2	5
5	1	3	6	9	7	8	4	2
9	2	4	8	5	3	6	7	1
6	8	7	4	2	1	5	3	9
3	9	1	7	6	8	2	5	4
7	6	5	3	4	2	9	1	8
2	4	8	5	1	9	3	6	7

CROSSWORD

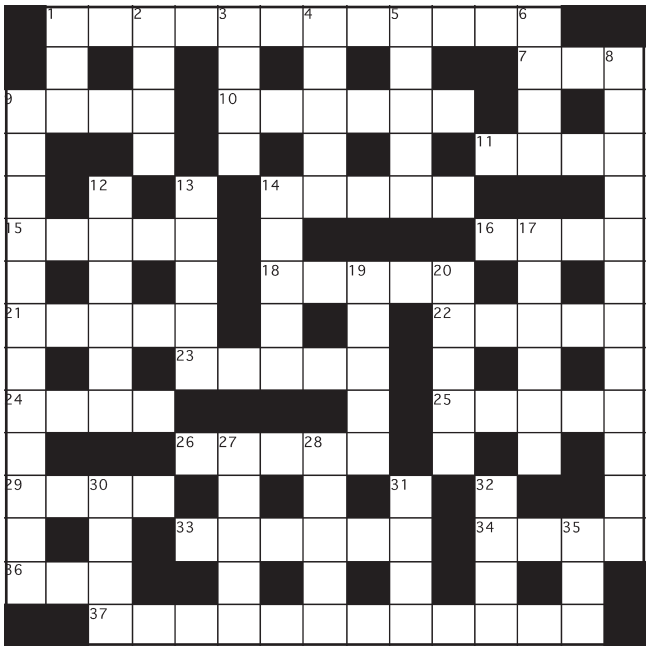
No.721

Clues Across

1 & 1d. This great tourist trail might break a tiny wildcat law. (4,8,3)
7. Part of the circumference of a circle. (3)
9. The beginner made it here from Tory. (4)
10. Holy building found on the side of the head. (6)
11. Nought. (4)
14. Mindless, silly. (5)
15. Gore and Eisenhower are similar. (5)
16. Goes out like the tide. (4)
18. Scare up amounts of land. (5)
21. Drug that contains morphine. (5)
22. Word of greeting. (5)
23 & 30d. No wallets are needed for such a mural structure. (5,4)
24. The ruler of Venice makes a pointer point. (4)
25. Groom oneself, as a bird may do. (5)
26. Cooks on a pan. (5)
29. Breaking stories. (4)
33. One who will hang ten without awaiting a verdict! (6)
34. Red gemstone. (4)
36. Snakelike fish. (3)
37. Tell a fib about five, and fifty make money - that way, you benefit from the experience. (4,3,5)

Clues Down

1. See 1 across.
2. Glance. (4)
3. Creative way to reorder the tray. (4)
4. Citrus fruit. (5)
5. Synthetic fabric. (5)
6. Home of our earliest ancestors. (4)
8. Sports event for an irate nation? (5-7)
9. In Nevada, a toxic mixture epitomises how to pay less to Revenue. (3,9)
12. It's one Scandinavian marauder versus one monarch, by the look of it. (6)
13. Bacteria. (5)
14. American state, capital Boise. (5)
17. See 35 down.
19. Coral formations. (5)
20. Craft a joint in the middle of a point-to-point. (5)
27. Itinerary. (5)
28. Pixie-like section of a Handel finale. (5)
30. See 23 across.
31. Spoken test. (4)
32. Vicinity. (4)
35 & 17d. Iconic mountain in the North West. (3,6)



Scribble pad

Last week's answers:

Clues Across: 1. Bap 3. Blind as a bat 8. Antrim 9. Huguenot 10. Creek 11. Dream 13. Cheat 15. Nuclear bunker 16. Janacek 20. Stuns 21. Repel 23. Birch 24. Alienate 25. Landau 26. Lagan Valley 27. Roe

Clues Down: 1. Bean counter 2. Pathetic 3. Brisk 4. No-hoper 5. Sound 7. Tit 12. Market house 13. Class 14. Trams 17. Corridor 18. Surreal 19. Spring 22. Linen 23. Beady 24. Awl